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NORTH WITCHFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

18 Dec

OF

THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year ended

31st December 1956



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

for the year ending 31st December 1956

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES and GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you my report for the year 1956 on the health condition of your district during that period.

I also present the Public Health Inspector's report.

I have the honour to be, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

CECIL THOMAS,

Medical Officer of Health.

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR HEALTH SERVICES

(1) Public Health Committee.

This comprises the whole Council.

(2) Public Health Officers.

Medical Officer of Health - CECIL THOMAS, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.
Public Health Inspector - JOHN METCALFE, M.R.S.H.

(3) Nursing in the Home.

The entire district has the services of Trained Nurses under the control of the Local Authority.

(4) Hospital.

Most patients are now treated at Doddington Hospital.

(5) Ambulance Facilities.

These are controlled by the County Council.

(6) Child Welfare.

Clinics are held at Doddington and Manca.


SOCIAL CONDITIONS.

The bulk of the adult population is engaged in agricultural work and there are a considerable number of small-holdings under the control of the Isle of Ely County Council. Agricultural work also provides seasonal employment for many of the female adult population.

GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (acres)	26,088
Population (estimated mid year by Registrar General) ...	4,790
Number of inhabited houses	1,688
Rateable Value	£33,806
Estimated net product of a penny rate	£129

The estimated population is 40 less than the previous year.
The Census return in 1951 was 5,023.



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VITAL STATISTICS.

Table 1. Live Births:

	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Legitimate	40	25	65
Illegitimate	4	-	4
	<u>44</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>69</u>

The birth rate for North Witchford Rural District in 1956 at 14.4 per 1,000 population shows a slight increase over that of the previous year (13.25 with 64 births) but still remains below the birth rate for England and Wales at 15.7 per 1,000 population, and which in 1955 was 15.00.

Table 2. Still Births:

There was one still birth (Female - legitimate) in the District in 1956, giving a Still Birth Death Rate of 14.28 per 1,000 live and still births. For England and Wales the figure for 1956 was 23.00.

Table 3. Infantile Mortality:

There were no deaths for infants under 1 year of age.

Table 4. Deaths in Area and Causes:

	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total.</u>
Malignant neoplasm stomach	1	-	1
Malignant neoplasm lung bronchus	1	-	1
Malignant neoplasm breast	-	1	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	4	1	5
Diabetes	-	1	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	1	5	6
Coronary disease angina	3	3	6
Other heart diseases	2	1	3
Other circulatory diseases	-	3	3
Influenza	1	1	2
Pneumonia	1	-	1
Bronchitis	1	-	1
Nephritis and nephrosis	-	1	1
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	2	5	7
	<u>17</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>39</u>

The death rate for 1956 was 8.14 per 1,000 population compared was 11.7 for England and Wales. For the previous year the District death rate (with 51 deaths) was 10.55 per 1,000 population as against 11.7 for the whole country.

NOTIFIABLE INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

	<u>Total Notified.</u>
Scarlet Fever	3
Portussis	2
Measles	27
Pneumonia	13
Erysipelas	5
Whooping Cough	1
Tuberculosis	5
Meningitis	1
Dysentery	1
Enteritis	1
	<u>59</u>

FOOD POISONING OUTBREAKS.

There was no notified outbreaks of food poisoning in the Rural District during 1956.

PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR, 1956.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

The following are the numbers of visits and inspections carried out during 1956.

Water Supply	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	70.
Drainage...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	70.
Fried Fish Shops..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.
Vans and Sheds	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	17.
Factories...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	26.
Bakehouses..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.
Sanitary Accommodation..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	89.
Refuse Dumps	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13.
Rats and Mice (including premises visited by Rodent Operator)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	63.
Manure and Refuse Accumulations	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	15.
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19.
Nightsoil Disposal	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	11.
Sewers and Sewage Disposal Works	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	90.
Dykes.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	35.
Building Byelaws..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	229.
New Drain and sewer inspections including tests.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	49.
Piggeries...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.
Petroleum Installations.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.

INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES.

(1)	Number of houses inspected under Public Health Acts and Housing Consolidated Regulations (excluding Council Houses)...	...	...	...	...	...	...	34.
(2)	Number of Inspections for the above purpose	...	...	...	...	...	...	55.
(3)	Number of houses surveyed for Slum Clearance (Not included in (1)).	...	...	...	...	...	...	13.
(4)	Number of Inspections at verminous houses.	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.
(5)	Number of visits to houses in connection with infectious Disease..	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.
(6)	Number of Inspections and Visits to houses in connection with Improvement Grants	...	...	...	...	...	...	88.
(7)	Number of Visits to Council Houses - Repairs, maintenance, and complaints, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	...	597.
(8)	Number of Dirty Houses cleansed. S.83. P.H.A.1936	...	...	...	...	...	...	1.

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTION.

Butchers' Shops and Slaughterhouses.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	19.
Grocers' Shops	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	27.
Ice Cream Premises (Retail)...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	15.
Interviews and Meetings attended	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1244.

NOTICES SERVED.

Number of written Informal Notices served.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	33.
No. of above complied with	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21.
No. of above where work in hand at close of year	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6.
Demolition Orders served	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	5.
Demolition Orders carried out (including those made pre 1956)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7.
No. of Closing Orders made	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2.
Undertakings accepted under Section 11(2) of Housing Act, 1936	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3.
Statutory Notices (Public Health Act) served and complied with..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4.

HOUSING.

No new Council houses were built during 1956, but a contract for the construction of roads, sewers and sewage disposal works for a new Housing Estate at Westfield, Manea, was well on the way towards completion by the end of the year and a start was made in the autumn on the erection of 30 three-bedroomed houses on the same Estate.

During the year the Council acquired a site with an area of 1.711 acres at Benwick for the erection of further houses as part of the Slum Clearance Programme. Unfortunately owing to the lack of main drainage facilities it has not been possible to proceed with any new housing scheme in this village. Altogether the Council has erected 251 dwellings, including 167 post-war houses and bungalows.

Only seven new dwellings were completed by private enterprise in 1956 and four more were under construction at the end of the year.

Detailed survey was made of thirteen houses during the year as part of the Slum Clearance Programme, five Demolition Orders were made, also two Closing Orders and in addition, Undertakings not to relet for human habitation were accepted in respect of three other houses, one of which was subsequently reconditioned. Nine dwellings were demolished, of which only one was the subject of a Demolition Order made in the previous year. Of the remainder two were huts in a camp at Manea and the others were included on a provisional schedule for Slum Clearance dwellings.

Seven written informal notices were served for repairs to houses, of which two were wholly completed by the end of the year, two partially completed and instructions for work to be carried out given for two of the others.

As in previous years considerable time was spent in dealing with repairs and maintenance of Council houses and 597 calls at such houses were made during the year for this purpose.

DIRTY PREMISES.

Arising out of a complaint an inspection was made of a dwelling occupied by a man age 42 living alone. The premises were found to be in a filthy condition, being littered with empty tins, bottles, dirty crockery, remnants of stale food hoarded in cupboards, dirty clothing and infested with mice. The occupier refused to co-operate and it was necessary to obtain 2 warrants from a local magistrate for the purpose of gaining entry in the first instance to make an inspection and in the second to permit the Council's workmen to carry out the cleansing of the premises following the failure of the occupier to obey the statutory notice served on him under Section 83 of the Public Health Act, 1936. Assistance from the police was necessary to enforce the warrant authorising entry. During the course of the cleansing operations the occupier left the premises and has never returned. Steps were also taken to deal with the mice infestation on the premises.

IMPROVEMENT GRANTS.

11 applications for Improvement Grants (involving 14 houses) were received during the year, of which 9 applications involving 11 houses were approved. The total value of the Grants approved amounted to £2,556. 8. 6d. The 2 applications for Grant which were refused involved 3 houses, these were inspected by a Sub-Committee who confirmed that the houses were not structurally in a sufficiently sound condition to justify the expense of public monies on improvement schemes and at the same time provide satisfactory housing accommodation. Properties which are considered to be borderline cases are inspected by a Sub-Committee.

of the houses covered by the schemes approved in 1956 were occupied by agricultural workers. 13 schemes were completed during the year. 88 inspections (including re-inspections) were made at premises during the year in connection with Improvement Grants.

No application was received for Grant under Section 3 of the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1938.

BUILDING BYELAWS.

67 plans were deposited with the Council under their Building Byelaws, all of which were approved. 229 inspections were made of premises in connection with the Building Byelaws. 49 inspections were made of new drains under construction, including testing new drains at 25 premises. In addition 13 inspections were made for the purpose of examining sections of new sewers laid at Westfield Housing site, Manea. The Building Byelaws operating in the Council's area are based on the Model issued by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and came into operation on the 7th November, 1953.

WATER SUPPLY.

The following is the information requested by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government :-

(i) In those parts of the parishes of Deddington, Wimblington and Benwick served by the Wisbech and District Water Board, the water supply has been adequate in quantity and there have been no complaints as to quality.

So far as the parish of Manea is concerned, the advent of the completion of the new 12" trunk main through Stonea linking up with the existing trunk main between March and Wimblington and also the 9" trunk main along the Sixteen Foot Drain at Stonea to Boots Bridge linking up with the existing main to Manea resulted in a vastly improved pressure to the latter and there has been no shortage of water at Manea during the latter part of the year. Owing to the dry weather during the first half of 1956 it was necessary to cart mains water for distribution to householders at Stonea on six occasions, 1,000 gallons being carted in each instance. There is no water supply to the parish of Welches Dam, other than one small area served by a supply from Ely R.D.C.

(ii) Routine independent sampling of piped water supplies is not carried out as the Water Board's Chemist carries out frequent bacteriological examinations of the mains water at selected sampling points, two samples were, however, taken independently upon request at Deddington Hospital to check upon the purity of the storage tanks. The report of the Public Health Laboratory (Cambridge) upon the first of these two samples stated that the water was not satisfactory, but the report on the second sample was favourable. The Hospital Authorities have since laid a new water main to the Hospital so as to provide direct from the main drinking supply and a new high level storage tank has been constructed.

(iii) No action by the Council was necessary in respect of contamination.

(iv) The local supply of water is not plumbo-solvent.

(v) Proportion of dwelling houses supplied from public mains :-

<u>Parish.</u>	<u>No. of Houses as per rate book.</u>	<u>No. with mains water</u>	<u>No. without mains water.</u>
Manea	486	415	71
Welches Dam	17	4	13
Wimblington	462	398	64
Doddington	482	417	65
Benwick	241	198	43
	<u>1688</u>	<u>1432</u>	<u>256</u>

For the following report of Water Analyses and Schedule of Works I am indebted to Mr. William D. Brighton (Chemist and Bacteriologist) and Mr. J. K. Dawson, A.M.I.C.E., A.M.I.W.E. (Water Engineer) of the Wisbech and District Water Board :-

Water Analyses 1956, North Witchford Rural District.

"Frequent bacteriological examinations were again carried out from sampling points in March, Doddington and Chatteris, of the piped water to the parishes of Benwick, Doddington, Wimblington and Manea.

No contaminations occurred during the year although one suspected case arose. Bacteriological examinations from a farm cottage at Benwick showed the absence of any harmful organisms, and the trouble was traced by chemical analysis to a length of defective copper tube. This was removed and replaced by polythene tube, and the trouble ceased.

Bacteriological examinations were made of every new length of main put into service, and none was passed for supply until the examination showed negative results.

Many chemical analyses were again performed on samples from source works and the distribution system."

	Number	Number giving positive result	Number giving negative result	% Negative
Bact. samples at March	86	Nil	86	100%
Bact. samples at Doddington	52	Nil	52	100%
Bact. samples at Chatteris	106	Nil	106	100%
Totals	244	Nil	244	100%

Schedule of Work carried out in North Witchford Rural District.

1st January - 31st December, 1956.
New Mains Laid.

12" Stowbridge - Wimblington Main	...	...	670 yards	12" main
			30 yards	9" "
			12 yards	6" "

9" Main, Stonea to Beets Bridge,	Wimblington	...	...	3,582 yards	9" main
				13 yards	3" "
Westfield Housing Estate, Manea	...	...		314 yards	3" "
Green Lane, Benwick	...	...	...	54 yards	2" "

Number of Premises Connected.

Benwick	...	...	...	20
Doddington.	...	...		2
Wimblington	...	...		9
Manea	...	...	...	3
Stonea	...	...	...	16
				<u>50</u>

Three statutory notices were served on the owners of premises at Benwick under the authority of Section 138 of the Public Health Act, 1936, as amended by the Water Act, 1945, requesting the provision of a piped water supply and the work was carried out by the owners in due course. The short extension of water main in Green Lane, Benwick, enabled two other properties to connect to the Board's supply.

Fifteen other dwelling houses at Benwick were afforded with mains water during the year, eight of which was by means of shared standpipes, these being old houses unsuitable for improvements.

With regard to the seven Rural Water Main Extension Schemes mentioned in the Annual Report for 1955, in the last month of the year (1956) a letter was received from the Ministry of Housing and Local Government notifying the provisional amount of the annual grant towards the cost of the schemes for a period of 12 years. These schemes will serve a number of outlying cottages and farms when they are ultimately carried out.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

Certain portions of the oldest built-up areas of Doddington, Wimblington and Manea are served by old combined storm water and foul sewers, all of which discharge into obsolete works or open dykes. It is not surprising therefore that considerable pollution by sewage matter occurs in such dykes, and in turn in the main drains forming part of the extensive land drainage system in the area, resulting in complaints from land users and Drainage Boards. With the advent of piped water supply in the village of Benwick, the need for a proper drainage system becomes apparent, since many occupiers wish to add modern amenities to their property long denied them owing to the absence of an adequate water supply.

Again it is not possible to report any real progress during the year with the proposed sewerage scheme for Benwick. The Consulting Engineers visited the area again and towards the end of the year arrangements were made for a number of trial bores to be made in the village in order to provide technical data required in the preparation of the scheme. Delay in the provision of main drainage for Benwick is not only giving rise to difficulties in the disposal of foul drainage from existing houses, including the post-war housing scheme, but has brought a further housing scheme to a standstill.

The post-war housing estates at Wimblington and Manea have been equipped with modern sewage disposal plants, whilst the new housing estate at Doddington has a septic tank outfall connected with the filter beds forming part of the old sewage disposal works in the village.

In addition to the usual maintenance work of cleansing sewage outfall dykes and emptying settlement tanks and catchpits at outfall works, a section of 6" diameter combined sewer was reconstructed in Green Lane, Benwick, and additional manholes provided on a 12" sewer in Norfolk Street, Wimblington. Reconstruction of other manholes and catchpits on sewers was also undertaken.

Drainage disposal to such other houses as are provided with drainage systems is, in the main, by use of septic tanks, cesspools and soakwells, which function with varying degrees of success. A large number of houses, particularly in Manea and Benwick, are provided with pail closets, and many other properties have vault closets.

PUBLIC CLEANSING.

Nightsoil is still collected by contractors, composted with straw and utilised as manure on arable land. The contracts provide for three collections of closet pails per fortnight and by the end of the year the number of closets dealt with was approximately 450. Unfortunately owing to the unpleasant nature of the task and consequent lack of competition it has become a regular feature for the work to be carried out during the hours of daylight. However, as a result of the Council's resolution in 1955, not to continue the emptying of closet pails and vaults at properties at Doddington capable of being drained to existing sewers, considerable progress has been made on the conversion of such closets to water closets. A similar resolution was made in 1956 in respect of certain streets in Wimblington, the date by which the nightsoil collection ceased for this area being 31st March, 1957. The number of closet conversions carried out in 1956 was as follows :-

<u>Parish.</u>	<u>Improvement Grant Schemes.</u>	<u>Cessation of Nightsoil Collection.</u>	<u>Others.</u>	<u>Total Conversions.</u>
Benwick	1	-	1	2
Doddington	1	8	5	14
Manea	5	-	1	6
Wimblington (including Stonea)	<u>2</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>12</u>
	<u>9</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>34</u>

Cesspools and vaults are emptied upon request from occupiers by one of the Contractors, who uses a cesspool emptier for this purpose. The contents are either discharged over arable land or disposed at the nightsoil tipping points.

Tins and indestructible household refuse are collected at monthly intervals by contract, employing the kerbside method. Disposal is effected in disused gravel pits, where the refuse is periodically covered with soil specially carted to the site. Unfortunately these sites are open to all-comers and a certain amount of indiscriminate tipping occurs which makes it difficult and expensive to cover the entire tipping face with soil. The refuse contractors carried out their duties very satisfactorily during the year under review.

MILK SUPPLY.

As from 1st October, 1956, in accordance with a declaration made by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Council's District was embodied in an area in which all milk sold by retail must be "Specially Designated" milk. The bulk of the milk supply is distributed by two firms operating from dairies situated outside the District and supplementary licences were issued to these firms under the Milk (Special Designation) Regulations, 1949 to 1954 as follows :-

Supplementary Licences:

Pasteurised	...	...	...	2
Tuberculin Tested	...	...	...	2
Tuberculin Tested (Pasteurised)	...	...	...	1
Sterilised	...	...	...	1

In addition there is one other retailer covering part of the area who retails bottled designated milk obtained from one of the principal retailers. This retailer was granted a Dealer's Licence.

8 samples of milk were taken during the year and submitted to the Public Health Laboratory at Cambridge for examination, details as follows :-

<u>Designation.</u>	<u>No. of Samples.</u>	<u>Result</u>	
		<u>Satisfactory.</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory.</u>
Pasteurised	3	3	-
T.T.(Farm Bottled)	2	2	-
T.T.(Pasteurised)	2	1	1
Sterilised	1	1	-
	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>

The phosphatase test on the unsatisfactory sample of T.T. (Pasteurised) milk gave a reading in excess of 2.3 Lovibond blue units. Upon investigation it was found that a defective recording thermometer in the pasteurising plant at the Dairy was responsible for this failure.

MEAT AND OTHER FOOD INSPECTION.

There are only 3 slaughterhouses licensed in the Rural District under S.57 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, the licences of which all expire on 16th August, 1957. These slaughterhouses are rarely used except for occasional casualties and a few pigs killed for private consumption. The six butchers who have shops in the District have nearly all their animals slaughtered in the neighbouring Urban District. No premises have been licensed for Deadweight Certification of Pigs.

During the year only 5 pigs were killed (intended for resale to the public) and inspected at one of the licensed slaughterhouses in the district. The carcass and organs of one pig were rejected as being unfit for human consumption owing to insufficiency of bleeding. Food stuffs inspected at Grocers' shops and voluntarily surrendered as being unfit for human consumption included 3 tins of corned beef. Total weight 18 lbs.

FOOD PREMISES.

(i). The number of food premises in the area is as follows :-

Grocer and general provision stores	...	...	18
Confectioners only	...	...	3
Butchers	...	...	6
Bakers	...	...	5
Greengrocer only	...	...	2
Fried Fish Shops	...	...	6
Cafes	...	...	3

Included in the premises classed as grocer and general provision stores is one new shop at Wimblington which replaces old premises previously used by the same person.

(ii). 13 premises are registered under Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, for the sale of ice cream. No ice cream is manufactured in the area and nearly all the retailers sell prepacked ice cream, which in every case is stored in proper refrigerator cabinets. There are no Dairies in the District.

- (iii). 15 inspections of registered food premises were made during the year and 8 samples of ice cream were taken at these, of which 7 were placed in Grade 1 and the remaining sample fell in Grade 2. Examination of the samples is undertaken by the Public Health Laboratory at Cambridge.
- (iv). No new educational activity was undertaken during the year other than that relating to the new Food Hygiene Regulations referred in to (viii) below.
- (v). The small quantities of condemned tinstuffs have been disposed of by burial at the refuse dumps. Rejected meat is either removed for disposal by burial or in the case of whole carcasses coloured with appropriate dye prior to removal by Knacker man.
- (vi). No examination of whole consignments of food was necessary.
- (vii). There are no ice cream manufacturers in the area.
- (viii). An abstract of the provisions of the new Food Hygiene Regulations 1955/1956 was distributed under cover of a special letter to all food premises in the district and inspection made of such premises. As a result of informal action, sinks were provided at 4 premises and mains water laid on to two of the same premises. 45 visits were made to food premises during the year. Byelaws for handling food were adopted by the Council in 1951 under Section 15 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938.

MOVEABLE DWELLINGS

There are no large caravan sites in the area. Ten licences were issued under Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936, authorising the use of caravans for a limited period on individual sites. Periodical inspections are made to ensure observance of sanitary requirements.

RODENT CONTROL.

Comparatively few complaints have been received regarding infestation generally, and these have all been dealt with. The various sewage dykes and refuse tips are treated regularly by the Council's employees. The Pest Department of the Isle of Ely County Agricultural Executive Committee carry out a considerable amount of rat destruction in the area, having contracts for the treatment of over 100 premises.

FACTORIES ACTS, 1937 AND 1948.

1. Inspections.

- (i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are enforced by the Local Authority
- (ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority

Number on Register.	Number of	
	Inspections.	Written Notices.
5	9	-
21	24	-
Total	33	-

4 premises were found to be in an unsatisfactory state of cleanliness. No outworkers are employed in the area.

J. METCALFE,

Public Health Inspector.

